

## **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LAW ENFORCEMENT & CORRECTIONS**

**March 4, 2004**

The Honorable,  
The Board of Commissioners of Cook County

### **ATTENDANCE**

Present: Chairman Maldonado, Vice Chairman Silvestri, and Commissioners Butler, Gorman, Moreno, Peraica and Quigley (7)

Absent: None (0)

Also Present: Commissioners Steele, Hansen, Maldonado, Peraica, Suffredin, Collins and Daley; Mark Killgallon, Chief of Human Resources; Patrick Driscoll, Chief, Civil Actions Bureau, States Attorney's Office

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Your Committee on Law Enforcement & Corrections of Cook County held a public hearing meeting pursuant to notice on Thursday, March 4, 2004 at the hour of 10:30 AM in the Board Room, Room 569, County Building, 118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Your Subcommittee has considered the following item(s) and upon adoption of this report, the recommendations are as follows:

263772 AN ORDINANCE CREATING AN EMPLOYMENT DEMONSTRATION PILOT PROJECT FOR FIRST TIME NONVIOLENT OFFENDERS ENTITLED "THE COOK COUNTY RE-ENTRY EMPLOYMENT PROJECT" (PROPOSED ORDINANCE). Submitting a Proposed Ordinance sponsored by Bobbie L. Steele and Roberto Maldonado, County Commissioners; Co-Sponsored by Jerry Butler, Earlean Collins, Elizabeth Ann Doody Gorman, Gregg Goslin, Carl R. Hansen, Joseph Mario Moreno, Joan Patricia Murphy, Anthony J. Peraica, Mike Quigley, Peter N. Silvestri, Deborah Sims and Larry Suffredin, County Commissioners.

The following is a synopsis of the Proposed Ordinance.

### **PROPOSED ORDINANCE**

#### **AN ORDINANCE CREATING AN EMPLOYMENT DEMONSTRATION PILOT PROJECT FOR FIRST TIME NONVIOLENT OFFENDERS ENTITLED "THE COOK COUNTY RE-ENTRY EMPLOYMENT PROJECT"**

**WHEREAS**, Illinois has the ninth largest prison system in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, there are currently almost 44,000 individuals incarcerated by the Illinois

Department of Corrections with an additional 35,000 under the Department's supervision in the State of Illinois; and

**WHEREAS**, there are approximately 30,000 inmates scheduled to be released from IDOC institutions this year with more than 60% returning to Cook County; and this year with more than 60% returning to Cook County; and

**WHEREAS**, currently there is a 44% recidivism rate for former offenders released from state correctional facilities in Illinois; and

**WHEREAS**, access to livable wage employment has proven to be a key factor in reducing the re-commission of crime and the rate of recidivism; and

**WHEREAS**, the unemployment rate among former incarcerated individuals who are county residents is higher than the general population in large part due to the social stigma of being an ex-offender, unfair employment discrimination, and the lack of access to legal employment opportunities, education and vocational training within sectors of government and private industry due to current policies; and

**WHEREAS**, government should be an exemplar to private industry in regards to providing equal opportunity for qualified individuals seeking employment.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners shall enact the following ordinance to establish and implement a Re-entry Employment Demonstration Pilot Program for 150 adults and 50 youth who are former offenders and residents of the County to facilitate more access to Cook County government employment opportunities and positions with private sector employers who secure contracts from Cook County as a strategy for increasing public safety and reducing recidivism.

**ARTICLE I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**ARTICLE II. DEFINITIONS**

**ARTICLE III. THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF REVIEW PANEL**

**ARTICLE IV. COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' PARTICIPATION**

**ARTICLE V. CATEGORIES OF SELECTED COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND ELIGIBILITY FACTORS**

**ARTICLE VI. LEGAL IMPACT OF COUNTY ISSUED CERTIFICATE OF GOOD CONDUCT AND REHABILITATION**

**ARTICLE VII. REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATE OF GOOD CONDUCT AND REHABILITATION**

**ARTICLE VIII. FORMS AND FILING**

**\*Referred to the Committee on the Department of Corrections Subcommittee on February 3, 2004.**

**Commissioner Maldonado, seconded by Commissioner Butler, moved the approval of Communication Nos. 263772 as amended. The motion carried.**

Commissioner Maldonado explained that the amendment deleted Section 5-1. He explained that the County would run an internship program for ex-offenders with entry-level positions at grade 9 for a year.

Then the ex-offender would have the opportunity to apply for employment with the county or with the private sector.

Commissioner Hansen asked for an explanation for the removal of Section 5-1.

Commissioner Maldonado replied that after discussing this with the chief sponsor of the ordinance, the language in Section 5-1 was deemed unnecessary.

The following public speakers spoke:

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|----|--------------------|--|
| 1) | Diane Williams     | Safer Foundation                                 |
| 2) | Brenda Palm-Barber | North Lawndale Network                           |
| 3) | George Williams    | Task, Inc.                                       |
| 4) | Sherrod Gordon     | Target   |
| 5) | Helen Mitchell     | University of Illinois, Public Policy Department |
| 6) | Eric Juczyk        | Concerned Citizen                                |
| 7) | Carolyn L. Winters | Concerned Citizen                                |
| 8) | Dwight Battles     | North Lawndale Network                           |
| 9) | Dennis Deer        | Deer Rehabilitation Services                     |

Commissioner Maldonado clarified that the ex-offenders would receive health insurance. He noted that all county offices, not just those under the President, would be involved.

Commissioner Silvestri asked whether the State's Attorney's Office had reviewed this ordinance.

Patrick Driscoll, Chief, Civil Actions Bureau, States Attorney's Office, replied in the affirmative. He noted that under the ordinance, non-ex-offenders could not be prevented from applying, and ex-offenders would not be favored. Mr. Driscoll noted that it is possibly unlawful to withhold pension rights from ex-offenders.

Commissioner Peraica asked, regarding page 4, Section 2-1c, why "supervision" was being included in the definition of a "conviction."

Chairman Steele replied that this is the exact language that is used in the state ordinance.

**Commissioner Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Hansen, moved to amend the amendment to Communication No. 263772, to change the words "certificate of good conduct and rehabilitation" to the term "certificate of completion" throughout the amendment. The motion was approved.**

Commissioner Suffredin requested that Mr. Driscoll examine the ordinance before it is approved at the Board Meeting.

At Vice-Chairman Silvestri's request, Mr. Driscoll agreed to submit a letter examining any legal issues before the board meeting.

**Commissioner Murphy, seconded by Commissioner Hansen, moved adoption of the amendment to Communication No. 263772. The motion carried.**

**Commissioner Maldonado, seconded by Commissioner Suffredin, moved the approval of Communication No. 263772 as amended. The motion carried.**

Mark Killgallon, Chief of Human Resources, stated that of the 27,000 county employees, approximately 14,000 are under the aegis of the County Board, and currently, these positions do not automatically exclude ex-offenders. He clarified that the JTDC and Cook County Jail facilities do not hire felons.

**Commissioner Butler moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Gorman. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Committee on Law Enforcement &  
Corrections

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Roberto Maldonado, Chairman

Attest:

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Michelle Harris, Secretary